DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 467 648 CS 511 334

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TITLE	Improving School Libraries and Independent Reading: 1997-2002 Impact Evaluation of the K-12 School Library Printed Materials Grant. Policy Issue Report.
INSTITUTION	Indiana Univ., Bloomington. Education Policy Center.
REPORT NO	R-2002-02
PUB DATE	2002-07-00
NOTE	25p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Indiana Education Policy Center, Smith Center for Research in Education, Suite 100, 2805 E. 10th St., Bloomington, IN 47408-2698. Tel: 812-855-1240; Web site: http://www.indiana.edu/ ~iepc.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research (143)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Educational Facilities Improvement; Elementary Secondary Education; *Independent Reading; *Library Funding; *Program Evaluation; *Public Schools; *School Libraries; School Surveys
IDENTIFIERS	Impact Studies; *Indiana; Middle Grades Reading Network IN

ABSTRACT

As part of a comprehensive strategy to improve the literacy of Indiana students, the Indiana General Assembly provided $4 million for K-8 schools for the 1997-1999 school years in the School Library Printed Materials Grant. The grant was expanded to K-12 for the second funding cycle--1999-2000 and 2000-2001 and the funds increased to $6 million. Another $6 million was appropriated for a third funding cycle, 2001-2002 and 2002-2003. At this time, the funds for 2002-2003 appear to be eliminated because of the state's budget difficulties. This report provides an analysis of the impact of state funding on K-8 school library purchasing and circulation data. The Middle Grades Reading Network surveyed every public school in the state in 1997 (before the grant began), 1998, 2000, and 2002. Respondents provided both quantitative and qualitative data. Findings indicate: state funding for school libraries resulted in a substantial increase in book purchases and circulation; book purchasing appears to have a cumulative but potentially short-lived effect on circulation; the library materials program appears to be associated with a number of positive student outcomes, including increased use of library materials, increased student ownership of school libraries, higher levels of independent reading, and higher reading achievement; and the range of books purchased across all K-8 school during 2002 is large. The survey is appended. (NKA)

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Improving School Libraries and Independent Reading: 1997-2002 Impact Evaluation of the K-12 School Library Printed Materials Grant

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Improving School Libraries and Independent Reading: 1997-2002 Impact Evaluation of the K-12 School Library Printed Materials Grant

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July 2002
Policy Issue Report #2002-02
Indiana Education Policy Center
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Improving School Libraries and Independent Reading: 1997-2002 Impact Evaluation of the K-12 School Library Printed Materials Grant

Executive Summary

As part of a comprehensive strategy to improve the literacy of Indiana students, the Indiana General Assembly provided $4 million for K-8 schools for the 1997-1999 school years in the School Library Printed Materials Grant. The grant was expanded to K-12 for the second funding cycle (1999-2000 and 2000-2001) and the funds increased to $6 million. Another $6 million was appropriated for a third funding cycle, 2001-2002 and 2002-2003. Due to state financial problems, school corporations received $3 million for 2001-2002 with the expectation that another $3 million would follow in 2002-2003. At the time of this analysis, the funds for 2002-2003 appear to be eliminated due to the state's budget difficulties.

The purpose of this report is to share an analysis of the impact of state funding on K-8 school library purchasing and circulation data. The Middle Grades Reading Network surveyed every public school in the state in the spring of 1997 (before the grant program began), 1998, 2000, and 2002. Respondents provided both quantitative (e.g., number of books purchased, total library circulation) and qualitative data (e.g., comments on an open-ended question).

Results

Table A contains the adjusted statistics for the four administrations of the survey. As can be seen in Figure A, book purchases rose sharply during the two fully-funded cycles of the program but dipped during the third, partially-funded cycle. Circulation numbers increased sharply during the first two cycles of the program but began to level off during the third cycle.

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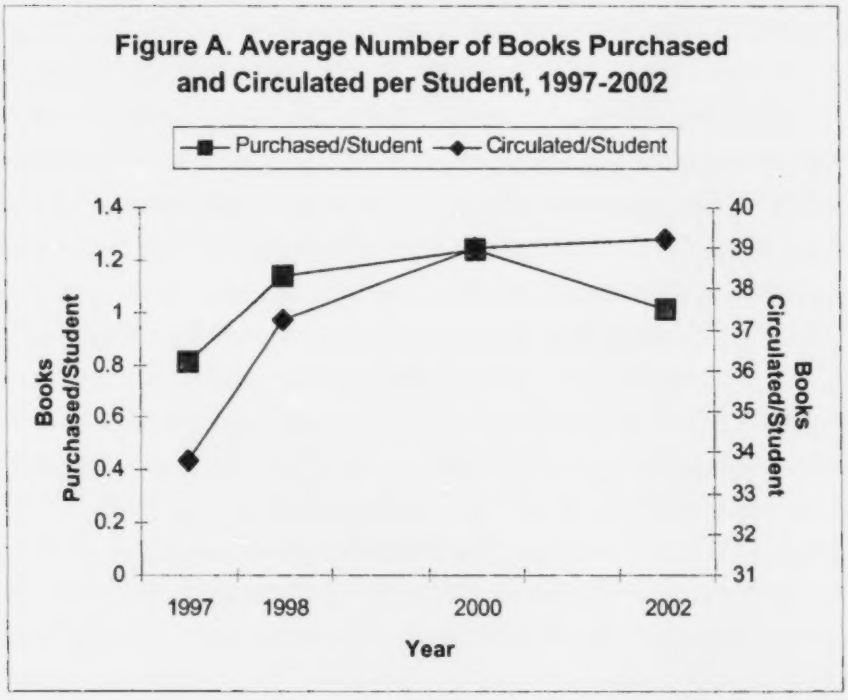
Table A. Adjusted Library Statistics, 1997 – 2002

Year	Students/ School	Books Purchased/ School	Books Purchased/ Student	Books Circulated/ School	Books Circulated/ Student
1997	494	400	0.81	16,382	33.8
1998	476	542	1.14	17,721	37.2
2000	474	588	1.24	18,492	39.0
2002	499	499	1.01	19,303	39.2

Note. Throughout this report, the year listed represents the spring of that academic year when the survey was distributed. For example, "1997" represents spring of the 1996-1997 school year.



Conclusions and Policy Implications

1. State funding for school libraries from 1998-2001 resulted in a substantial increase in book purchases and circulation.

   The Library Materials Grant Program had a quick and direct impact on the availability and quality of materials available to Indiana students, resulting in greater levels of circulation and independent reading.

2. Book purchasing appears to have a cumulative but potentially short-lived effect on circulation: The reduced level of state funding for school libraries in 2001-2002 resulted in a decline in book purchasing. This decline may explain the relatively small increase in circulation during the most recent school year, 2001-2002.

   Lack of targeted funding may erode circulation numbers, eventually impacting reading achievement.

3. The library materials program appears to be associated with a number of positive student outcomes, including increased use of library materials, increased student ownership of school libraries, higher levels of independent reading, and higher reading achievement.

   Despite the state's considerable financial constraints, the role of library materials should be considered in any comprehensive plan to increase the literacy of Indiana's students.

4. The range of books purchased across all K-8 schools during 2002 is large: some schools purchased no books, while others purchased many books per student.

   Were the program to continue, greater resources should be devoted to program oversight to ensure that the funding is being used to put books in the hands of Indiana's students.

Improving School Libraries and Independent Reading: 1997-2002 Impact Evaluation of the K-12 School Library Printed Materials Grant

In the nation's quest to increase the literacy of every student, evidence of the importance of school libraries continues to mount. At this year's White House Conference on School Libraries, Keith Lance of the Colorado State Library reported on studies conducted in Alaska, Colorado, Iowa, New Mexico, Oregon, and Pennsylvania. Results suggest that when school libraries have higher levels of professional and total staffing, large collections of print and electronic resources, and more funding, students tend to earn higher scores on state reading tests (Lance, 2002; Lance et al., 1993; Lance et al., 2000).

In addition, recent results from the federally-sponsored National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) provide evidence that students who read for fun every day have significantly higher reading achievement scores than students who read less frequently (NCES, 2002). The results of these studies provide convincing evidence that active school libraries promote student reading achievement.

As part of a comprehensive strategy to improve the literacy of Indiana students, the state legislature created the School Library Printed Materials Grant starting with the 1997-1998 school year. The purpose of this report is to share an analysis of the impact of state funding on K-8 school library purchasing and circulation data. Data were collected during the spring of 2002 and are compared to the results of previous surveys.

Recent History of State Funding of School Libraries in Indiana

The Indiana General Assembly provided $4 million for K-8 schools for the 1997-1999 school years in the School Library Printed Materials Grant. The grant was expanded to K-12 for the second funding cycle (1999-2000 and 2000-2001) and the funds increased to $6 million. School corporations could spend the funds for any grade levels from K-12.

Another $6 million was appropriated for a third funding cycle, 2001-2002 and 2002-2003. Due to state financial problems, school corporations received $3 million for 2001-2002 with the expectation that another $3 million would follow in 2002-2003. However, at the time of this analysis, the funds for 2002-2003 appear to be eliminated due to the state's budget difficulties.

School corporations received and spent most of the funds for each biennium during the first year of funding. Thus school corporations spent most if not all of the $4 million for 1997-1999 in 1997-1998, the $6 million for 1999-2001 in 1999-2000, and the $3 million in 2001-2002.

Methodology

All Indiana public schools were sent a survey in the spring of 1997 to determine the number of books purchased and circulated during 1997. This was prior to state funding for school library books. Subsequently, library surveys were sent to schools in 1998, 2000, and 2002. The 2002 Survey is included in Appendix A. The survey was distributed by the Middle Grades Reading Network. In 2002, 1,240 schools returned surveys, of which 911 contained at least one grade in the K-8 range. The survey was mailed to 1,845 schools, resulting in a response rate of 67.2%.

Results

The survey included three purchasing and circulation questions and one open-ended prompt, and the data from these two sections were analyzed separately.

Quantitative Results

Demographic and library statistics appear in Table 1. In general, total book purchasing appears to have increased substantially from the 1996-1997 school year (before the availability of the library materials funding) to the 2001-2002 school year. However, given that the 1999-2000 school year was the final year of full funding for the program, the increase from 1996-1997 to 1999-2000 is even larger.

Table 1. Demographic and Library Statistics, 1997 – 2002

Year	Schools	Students	Range in Students	Books Purchased	Range in Books Purchased	Books Circulated	Range in Books Circulated
1997	989	488,313	30-2,150	395,645	28-6,304	16,498,134	0-209,000
1998	1,110	528,166	73-2,146	602,112	0-7,650	19,670,737	0-183,447
2000	1,292	612,590	75-2,132	760,103	0-10,326	23,892,216	0-288,050
2002[a]	1,240	610,079	102-2,138	618,077	0-7,649	23,936,107	210-91,729

Note. Throughout this report, the year listed represents the spring of that academic year when the survey was distributed. For example, "1997" represents spring of the 1996-1997 school year.
[a]Response rate for 2002 survey was 67.2% (1,240 responses from 1,845 schools).

However, given the different response rates for the four years of the surveys, the purchase and circulation data should be adjusted per school and per student (Table 2).

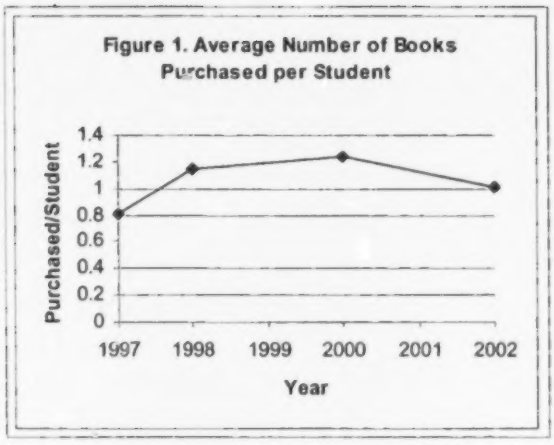
The number of books purchased per school and per student increased nearly 25% from 1997 to 2002, and the number of books circulated per school and per student increased nearly 18% and 16%, respectively, over the course of the funding program. However, over the first four years of the program (1997-2001), the purchasing increases were much greater: Books purchased per school increased 47% and books purchased per student increased over 50%. Funding was reduced during the 2001-2002 school year due to a revised state disbursement schedule.

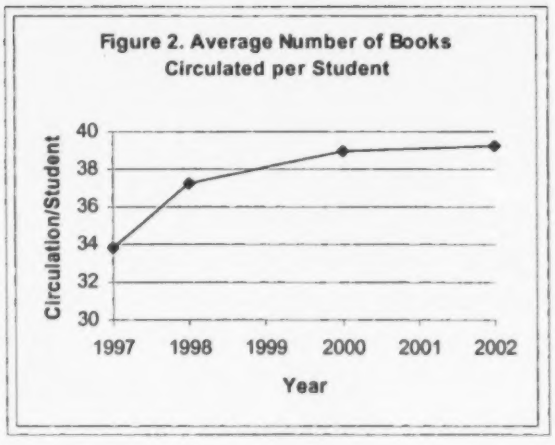
Book circulation statistics are slightly lower from 1997-2000 than from 1997-2002, suggesting that book purchasing has a cumulative effect on circulation. In particular, circulation per school increased nearly 13% and circulation per student increased just over 15% from 1997-2000, slightly lower percentages than are observed from 1997-2002.

Overall, book purchasing per student increased substantially during the fully-funded portion of the library materials program and dipped during the past, partially funded school year (Figure 1). However, library book circulation per student has continued to increase, although the rate of increase has moderated over the past two years (Figure 2).

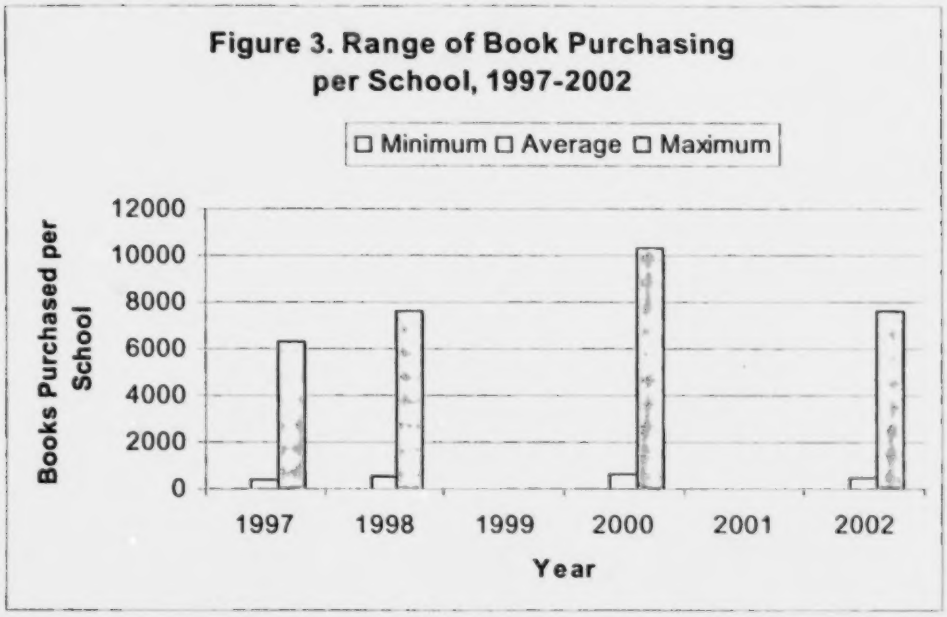
Table 2. Adjusted Library Statistics, 1997 – 2002

Year	Students/ School	Books Purchased/ School	Books Purchased/ Student	Books Circulated/ School	Books Circulated/ Student
1997	494	400	0.81	16,382	33.8
1998	476	542	1.14	17,721	37.2
2000	474	588	1.24	18,492	39.0
2002	499	499	1.01	19,303	39.2





The data in Tables 1 and 2 suggest that schools used their funding in widely different ways, given the considerable range in book purchasing per school. Figure 3 depicts the range in book purchasing per school from 1997-2002. The range is staggering, with some schools reporting little or no purchasing of books from the available funds, and other schools reporting extensive purchasing programs. Given the requirement that districts match the state funding dollar for dollar, it is difficult to understand how such a range in purchasing could occur. The data for purchases per student show a similarly wide range (Figure 4). For example, books purchased per student in K-8 schools range from 0 (six schools) to 11.3 (one school), with 57% of schools reporting an average of less than one book purchased per student and 8% of schools reporting more than two books purchased per student. Even in the presence of reporting errors, the range for these statistics is surprisingly large.



Note. Minimum for 1997 is 28, minimum for 1998-2002 is 0. Data not collected in 1999 or 2001.

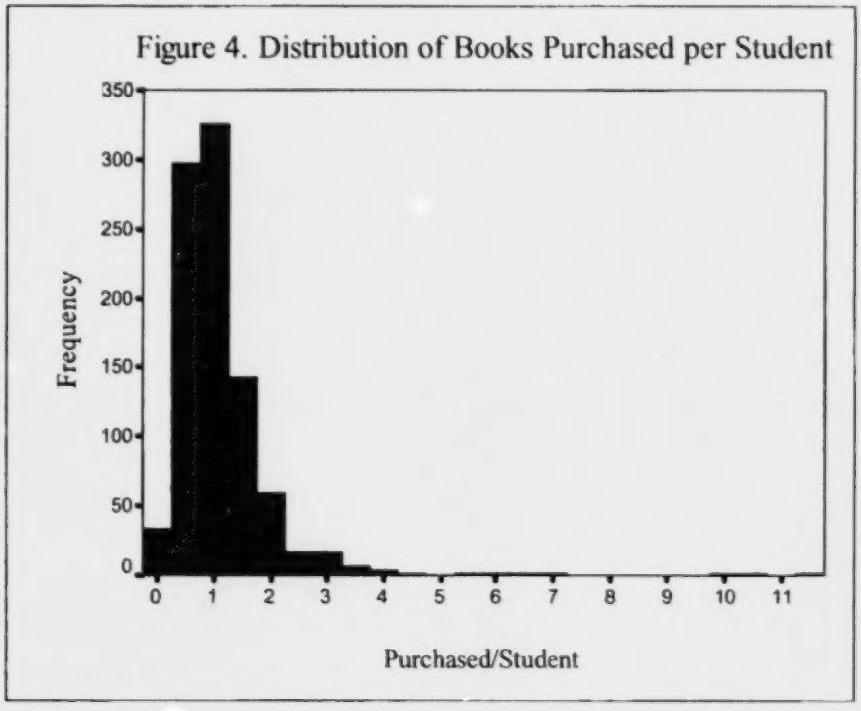


Table 3 and Figure 5 contain information about ISTEP+ state average reading scores (NCEs) and average library circulation per student. Although the data are insufficient for drawing firm conclusions about the relationship between circulation and achievement test scores – made more difficult by changes to the ISTEP+ test format and administration over the past half decade – there is sufficient evidence to conclude that library circulation does not hurt achievement test scores and may help increase them.

Figure 5. ISTEP+ Reading Scores (NCEs) and Circulation per Student

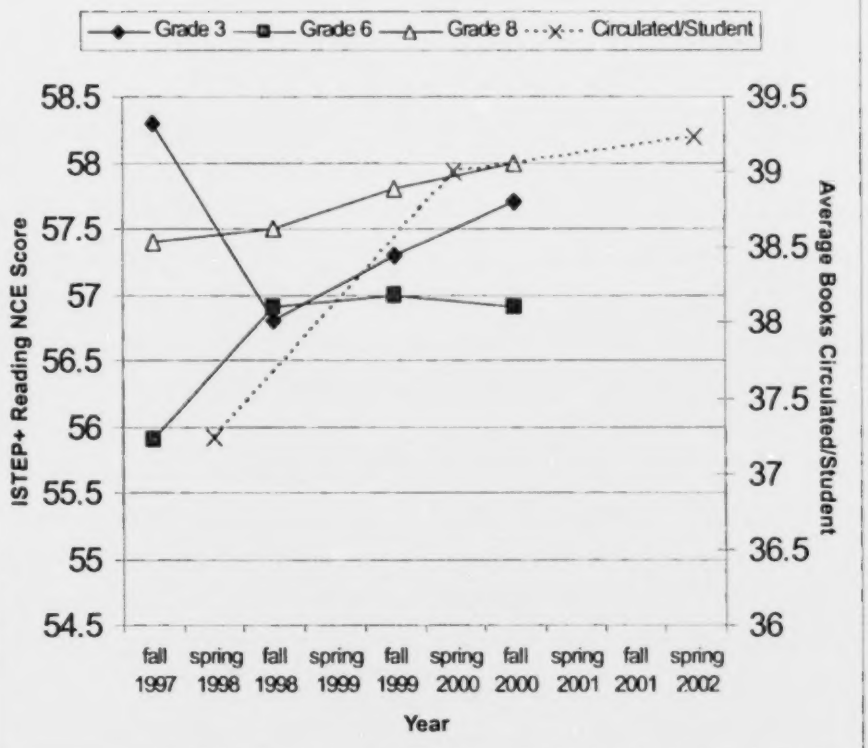


Table 3. ISTEP+ Reading NCE Scores and Adjusted Circulation Rates

Year	Grade 3	Grade 6	Grade 8	Circulated/ Student
1997-1998	58.3	55.9	57.4	37.2
1998-1999	56.8	56.9	57.5	n/a
1999-2000	57.3	57.0	57.8	39.0
2000-2001	57.7	56.9	58.0	n/a
2001-2002	n/a	n/a	n/a	39.2

Note: ISTEP+ scores are state averages collected in the fall, and circulation statistics are averages from the schools that participated in the survey in the spring. Reading NCE scores are not available for the 2001-2002 school year due to a change in the ISTEP+ testing program.

Qualitative Results

Nearly 850 surveys included responses to the open-ended survey question: Please comment on how the state and matching local board funds have helped increase independent reading in your school.

Overall, the great majority of the respondents discussed the appeal of new materials, the increased ability to support school literacy efforts, positive student outcomes, and the future of the library materials program. Specifically, nine different themes in four distinct categories emerged from the data analysis:

- **Increase in Ability to Purchase Materials**
  - New/Popular books (theme present in 225 responses)
  - Replacement of old or worn books/ Increase in copyright dates (81)
- **Increase in Ability to Support School Reading Programs**
  - Use of money to purchase books to support curriculum or to purchase nonfiction (77)
  - Creation or expansion of reading programs (189)
- **Positive Student Outcomes**
  - Increase in circulation (120)
  - Increase in reading ability and test scores (38)
  - More independent reading (79)
  - Ability to give students feelings of library ownership (64)
- **Future of Library Materials Grant Program**
  - Mention of the need for the funds to continue (103)

Several respondents provided comments that cut across these categories. Representative responses include:

> *In my nearly 20 years as a library media specialist, I have observed the effects of many different reading incentives. Without a doubt, new books are the most powerful encouragement for reading, especially when those books are titles that students want to read. An increase in book budgets guarantees an increase in circulation.*

> *As a school media specialist, I am glad I live and work in a state that believes in the power of reading. The matching grants given over the past few years have helped to build our collection of both fiction and nonfiction and to provide books of interest to our students, thereby increasing the amount of reading done by our students. Statistics show that our circulation rose by about 1000 every year of the grant. In fact, by 2001, our students had checked out nearly 3,500 more books than they did in 1998.*

> *I can't begin to tell you how much this grant has helped us—look at our circulation statistics. School wide we have made a big push towards recreational reading. We want our students to realize that reading can be fun. We have had one evening after school encouraging parents and children to read together—it was a huge success. This grant has allowed me to do so many things to encourage students to read. It is working!*

Increase in Ability to Purchase Materials

New/popular books. Several respondents discussed the importance of new and attractive books in inciting reading. One librarian mentioned that many children do in fact "judge a book by its cover" and that new books are instrumental in encouraging reading. Many of the comments also mentioned the importance of buying books on current topics.

> *Our students needed contemporary fiction for reading. We have several gifted readers, who had read many of the books of interest to them already. Also, many of our students have low-literacy, which creates a very diverse challenge. We have a growing Hispanic community as well, and this was our first opportunity to purchase materials for students who have an interest in Spanish.*

> *Our collection and circulation has increased due to the grant. The better our collection the more students are interested in reading. The grant allowed for the purchase of high interest/low reading level books used to entice our high percentage of special needs students. Please continue to see the value of funding this grant.*

> *Our students are enjoying the new books that we have purchased through the School Library Grant Program. Because the books are attractive, readable, and interesting, they are very appealing. Sometimes students express amazement that a 'book' can be so 'cool.'*

Before the school library materials grant program I purchased almost no books for pleasure reading or for special interests. My budget simply did not allow for anything except curriculum support. The grants have made it possible for us to buy books that kids want to read. I have seen a renewed interest in reading. We have even hooked a few non-readers.

The state funds are helping to rebuild our collection. It is the best thing that has happened for kids since the 60s. One cannot lure students to read with old, ugly books, no matter how good they are. We need new, current materials and our students are responding. They love them!!! Please continue!!!

Replacement of old or worn books/Increase in copyright dates. Many librarians specifically mentioned that existing books were being replaced or that old and outdated material was being replaced. Weeding out, if you will, is the common theme here.

[The library materials grant] has allowed me to purchase many newly published books as well as replace a few old classics that were falling apart. It has also allowed me to update the nonfiction section of the library media center, replacing outdated materials with current items. When started here five years ago, there were science books that said, "Man will someday walk on the moon." Removing such terribly outdated material from the shelves left some sections a little bare. Thanks to this grant and another grant that our school received our school circulation and ... students' reading abilities have increased.

We are projecting an increase in circulation of 2,500 titles over last year .... New books fly off the shelves, and older books that have been replaced with new updated editions are being checked out again. Our students are always excited to see new books in the library. THANK YOU!!

Our collection is reflective of the 1960s era. The average publication dates are 1960-1966. Being able to purchase new books that students relate to has gotten the students on fire about reading. They enjoy coming to the library and asking for the new books.

Increase in Ability to Support School Reading Programs

Use of money to purchase books to support curriculum or to purchase nonfiction. As mentioned earlier, many of the comments focused on the growth in independent reading due to the influx of new, popular titles; however, there were also frequent comments that the funds were used to support curriculum or the purchase of reference and nonfiction.

With the grant monies, we have been able to update our leisure reading titles for students. Our PL 221 emphasis is dealing with reading, so having young adult books is critical. The additional funding provided titles for new and changed curriculum; a real plus when weeding must be done.

Teachers have been able to utilize the newer updated added volumes in their teaching curriculum enlarging the students' educational experience. These experiences pique students'

interests and engender a desire to pursue those interests by reading independently in those topics.

The library was able to purchase volumes promoting good role models of various ethnicities for our students. Students relate to these positive role models widening perceptions of the world and its peoples. This causes students to show an increased positive interest in reading fiction and nonfiction about those places and people.

Creation or expansion of reading programs. A significant percentage of comments indicated that the funds were used to either start or increase the scope of reading incentive programs. The four most frequently mentioned programs were the Young Hoosier Book Award, Reading Counts, Eliot Rosewater, and accelerated programs. It was often stated that participation in these programs increased the child's reading comprehension and will improve the probability that the child will become a life long reader.

The matching funds have been heaven-sent! We started the [accelerated reading] program with our 7th graders and without the matching grants, the program would not have gotten off the ground. The additional funds enabled us to purchase books at the lower reading level as well as the upper reading level. (It appears that most new, popular and/or prize-winning books ... are aimed at the mid-level.) These additional purchases helped make this program a big success. We're planning to include the 8th graders in the program next year ....

With a new selection of fiction books, our Reading Counts Program has shown a 159% increase in reading.

It has made it possible to purchase books for the YHBA contest that is voluntary & has sparked the interest of students to read a book and take a computer test on the books during their recesses. (Amazing)

Positive Student Outcomes

Librarians shared evidence of a number of positive student outcomes, including increased use of library materials, reading and reading achievement, and attitude toward reading. The following response is representative of many positive student outcomes.

Our school serves many children from low socio-economic backgrounds. A majority of our children do not have books in their home to read or money to purchase books. This leaves the school corporation as the sole provider of reading materials for our children. This grant has given our school the opportunity to purchase a wide range of award winning books listed on the Indiana Reading List designed as a companion piece to Indiana's Academic Standards in English/Language Arts. High interest books have increased independent reading by over 25 % and STAR reading scores by 10%. There is no doubt that this will help increase fall 2002 ISTEP scores.

Increase in circulation. Several respondents provided specific evidence of a direct correlation between an increase in circulation and the allocation of the state funds.

Our students have increased the check-out rate over the last four years from 9,300 to over 17,000 .... I appreciate being able to order more new books for our students' needs with the extra money provided by the grant.

The new books inspire even non-readers (those who [normally] refuse to check out books) to line up to put their names on reserve lists for a book that has interested them. 2000-2001 circulations were 2,238 checkouts more than the 1999-2000 year.

In the last few years ... our circulation has increased from 4,709 in 1997 to 7,756 in 2001. Kids are more willing to read new looking books as the covers attract them, plus they take better care of them.

Our circulation has increased about 1,000 books a year for each of the last several years .... It is also exciting to hear students discussing books they have read and recommending them to peers.

The numbers of books purchased and circulated represent a 100% increase in these categories over the previous school year. Both numbers are a direct reflection of the benefit we received from state matching funds.

Increase in reading ability and test scores. Several librarians shared evidence of increased student reading achievement resulting from the media funding.

The funds have had a tremendous effect on independent reading .... Our reading scores have improved and I believe the state book grant played a great part.

Fall 2001 ISTEP scores language arts: 8th grade scores were between 81-85% mastery. All areas were above the state proficiency level of 75%. 10th grade ... achieved 80% mastery in all areas of the language arts essential skills, well over the 75% state proficiency level. Scores seem to improve when students have more books and newer, nicer books to select from.

The School Library Grant Program funds have helped us so very much because we have initiated a silent sustained reading program and can supply our students with current and well reviewed books. We feel that recreational reading supported by the School Library Grant Program has resulted in higher ISTEP scores for our students.

We have been able to purchase many more books of student interest .... The books have enabled many of our students to make the transition from easy reader to fiction books. In the past this has been more difficult for our students.

The state grant money has really helped update our small library. Our ISTEP scores for this year's third graders tell me that consistent access to a decent collection and incentive to use it can work wonders.

More independent reading. The following comments are representative of those that mentioned an increase in independent reading in addition to existing reading incentive programs.

The increase of new, quality books in our library combined with a couple of other changes in our library program have contributed to an explosive growth in independent reading in our school. For the 1997-1998 school year, our circulation was 14,000 books. That grew to just over 25,000 last year with 42,000 anticipated this year - a 300% [increase]!

Independent reading has tripled, and it would have not happened without the state and matching funds. When the students see new books they are as excited as I am. They are always asking when will there be new books.

The response to items purchased with state and local matching funds has reached beyond my expectations. Our junior/senior high students are excited about finding books they want to read in our library. Students are talking about their reading among themselves as well as with me. Our curriculum is now enriched with independent reading, as it had never been before these funds were available.

Ability to give students feelings of library ownership. Many respondents mentioned that they accepted requests from the students for what books to purchase which sparks a greater interest in reading.

The school library grant funds have enabled me to purchase many books that the students have requested. I feel very inadequate when I don't have the kinds of books that the students want to read. Before this type of funding, it was rare to purchase more than one copy of a book and the students were on long waiting lists for some of the favorite titles. Also my budget has been cut twice in the past 5 years. The most recent cut was 20%; I now have only $4000 to spend on books, which amounts to $6.66 per student. I greatly appreciate the grant and would like to thank you for your efforts in seeing that this grant continues.

I use the ... grant monies to purchase all student requests. The students submit requests and I do immediate orders to fulfill them. The students know that books will come as quickly as possible. Much of my allotted corporation monies go to maintaining curricular materials so I really appreciate the grant dollars and matching funds to make the students feel an ownership in the media center.

Having state and local funds has enabled us to purchase more student requests that have created a reading 'grapevine' among the students. It also increases their requests for more! It's encouraging to see.

We have seen an increase in reading. Students have come to me and said, "Thank you for letting me choose books that I can read."

With our improved selection of new and popular books, students are enjoying visiting the library to select books for both schoolwork and independent reading. Since they have a daily time to read independently in their classrooms, students frequently visit the library to exchange their books. They are also reading independently and with their parents at home. Students, staff, parents, and community members feel ownership in our library because they make suggestions about the books that we should order. They are thrilled to see the new books that they suggested to purchase. Everyone is a winner when more students are learning to read by reading.

Future of Library Materials Grant Program

Over 100 comments were made about the importance of the funding program, especially in light of recent budget cuts at the district level. The impact appears to be even more substantial in small inner-city and rural schools. As one librarian shared, *"It's nice to know that our government recognizes [libraries'] importance and provides financial support."*

> *Our school district is feeling the budget 'crunch.' The funds received via the School Library Grant Program and Title VI are the only monies used to purchase books during the 01-02 school years. Please do NOT cut the funds. Our circulation statistics are steadily rising! Please do NOT go backwards.*
>
> *Over half of the books purchased so far this school year have been bought with state and matching local funds. Students have more books at their fingertips than what I could afford to buy from my yearly school budget. Classroom teachers have increased the amount of required reading for their classes, and my students have a broader selection from which to choose. I truly appreciate the extra funds.*
>
> *We do not have a PTA to raise funds. We also raise very limited funds with Book Fairs due to the lower socio-economic rate of 95% of our students. This money almost doubles what we were able to purchase before the state funds were available.*
>
> *Without the grant we would not have funds available for recreational reading materials that add so much to children's love of reading and thereby learning. Thank you for making this grant a budget priority. The students also want to thank you. If you could see their actions as they try to be first to check out a great new book, you would see first-hand the difference the funds make.*
>
> *State funds and grants are vital to the survival and growth of the program. Only 17% of reading materials were purchased with [district] library money, the balance was purchased by grant funds.*
>
> *The books we purchased this year were all purchased with the School Library Grant money. All of our other money has been spent or frozen since April 2001. Thank goodness for the grant money! Otherwise we would have had no new books at all this year.*
>
> *In the past two years, we have seen a 20-30% decrease in our local funding for library books. Without the state grant, we would find ourselves without the funding needed to promote independent reading.*

Study Limitations

This analysis has several limitations. For example, schools voluntarily completed and returned the surveys. A very large percentage of schools have returned the surveys over the past three administrations (i.e., 1998, 2000, 2002), but the data should be interpreted with the knowledge that they do not include every Indiana public school.

A related limitation is the self-report nature of the surveys. Respondents may have made reporting errors, which will influence some of the data. Policy Center staff examined the

individual survey responses to locate reporting errors in the 2002 responses. However, staff did not have access to individual survey responses prior to 2002, making data-checking difficult. State average data appear to be relatively stable over the past few years, minimizing the impact of this limitation. However, some bias in open-ended responses may have resulted from respondents' concerns about the future of the grant program.

Also, comparisons between survey data and state average ISTEP+ scores have several limitations. First, the ISTEP+ scores include every school in Indiana, and the survey statistics do not represent every school in the state. Second, the achievement tests are not administered every year, making comparisons very complicated. Finally, more time is needed to determine the stability of the trends included in Table 3 and Figure 5.

A fourth limitation that should be noted is the structure of the funding program itself. In the first two funding cycles, schools received their matching funds for the entire two-year cycle during the first year. Consequently, funding patterns are not consistent from year-to-year, as some schools may have used the funds immediately while others may have spread the funding over the two-year period. As an added complication, funding was limited to K-8 schools during the first funding cycle but expanded to K-12 schools in subsequent cycles. Therefore, conclusions about when funds were spent are limited: At best, readers can assume that $4 million was spent during the 1997-1999 academic years, $6 million during 1999-2001, and $3 million during 2001-2002. The last two figures probably amount to less of a per student increase from the first cycle than may be expected, due to the increase in grade levels eligible for the targeted funds. Indeed, the $3 million during 2001-2002 may even represent a decrease in per student funding relative to the first funding cycle.

Conclusions and Policy Implications

As a result of this analysis, the following conclusions and implications appear to be reasonable:

1. State funding for school libraries from 1998-2001 resulted in a substantial increase in book purchases and circulation.

    - The Library Materials Grant Program had a quick and direct impact on the availability and quality of materials available to Indiana students, resulting in greater levels of circulation and independent reading.

2. Book purchasing appears to have a cumulative but potentially short-lived effect on circulation: The reduced level of state funding for school libraries in 2001-2002 resulted in a decline in book purchasing. This decline may explain the relatively small increase in circulation during the most recent school year, 2001-2002.

    - Lack of targeted funding may erode circulation numbers, eventually impacting reading achievement.

3. The library materials program appears to be associated with a number of positive student outcomes, including increased use of library materials, increased student ownership of school libraries, higher levels of independent reading, and higher reading achievement.

    - Despite the state's considerable financial constraints, the role of library materials should be considered in any comprehensive plan to increase the literacy of Indiana's students.

4. The range of books purchased across all K-8 schools during 2002 is large: Some schools purchased no books, while others purchased many books per student.

    - Were the program to continue, greater resources should be devoted to program oversight to ensure that the funding is being used to put books in the hands of Indiana's students.

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Appendix A
2002 Survey

MIDDLE GRADES READING NETWORK
SCHOOL LIBRARY GRANT PROGRAM SURVEY

Please circle the grade levels of your school

K 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

_____ INDICATE NUMBER OF STUDENTS IN SCHOOL (IN SEPTEMBER 2001)

_____ INDICATE NUMBER OF LIBRARY BOOKS PURCHASED DURING THIS SCHOOL YEAR INCLUDING THOSE ORDERED BUT NOT YET RECEIVED

____ INDICATE NUMBER OF LIBRARY BOOKS CIRCULATED DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR (AUGUST 2001-MAY 2002) INCLUDE AN ESTIMATE OF BOOKS THAT WILL BE CIRCULATED BY THE END OF THE SCHOOL YEAR

PLEASE COMMENT ON HOW THE STATE AND MATCHING LOCAL BOARD FUNDS HAVE HELPED INCREASE INDEPENDENT READING IN YOUR SCHOOL

RETURN IN THE ENCLOSED ENVELOPE BY APRIL 27, 2002

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